

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS PINT, PINS, GR

SUBJ: CONVICTIONS IN MEAT SCANDAL TRIAL

REF ATHENS 3877, 2991

1. SUMMARY, ATHENS SPECIAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL JUNE 27 SENTENCED 34 PERSONS TO PRISON TERMS RANGING FROM SIX MONTHS TO 13 YEARS AFTER THEIR CONVICTION ON CHARGES OF ILLEGAL IMPORT AND SALE OF MEAT, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION. FORMER UNDER-SECRETARY OF COMMERCE BALOPULOS WAS SENTENCED TO FIVE YEAR TERM. SIX OF ACCUSED ACQUITTED END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST TRIAL SINCE ADVENT OF NOVEMBER 25 JUNTA TO INVOLVE CHARGE OF OFFICIAL MISMANAGEMENT AND CORRUPTION ENDED AFTER TWENTY-TWO COURTROOM DAYS WITH 34 CONVICTIONS AND SIX ACQUITTALS. HEAVIEST PENALTY-THIRTEEN YEARS AND 100,000 DOLS FINE-WENT TO ATHENS' MERCHANT STAVROS TSONIS WHO ORGANIZED ILLEGAL MEAT IMPORTING SCHEME. FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF COMMERCE MINISTRY, ZAFIRIOS PAPAMICHALOPOULOS WAS SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS. HIS BOSS, FORMER UNDERSECRETARY OF COMMERCE, MICHAEL BALOPOULOS, WAS FOUND GUILTY ON ONLY ONE OF TWENTY-SEVEN CHARGES, THAT OF DERELICTION OF MINISTERIAL DUTY UNDER PROVISIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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OF A LAW INTRODUCED IN 1971 BY FORMER PM PAPADOPOULOS.

BALOPOULOS RECEIVED A FOUR YEAR SENTENCE, WHICH WAS SIX MONTHS LESS THAN PROSECUTION DEMANDED. OTHER SENTENCES RANGED FROM SIX MONTHS TO SEVEN YEARS WITH THOSE RECEIVING ONE YEAR OR LESS ENTITLED TO BUY OFF PRISON TERM. ALL HAVE APPEALED SENTENCES, WITH REVIEW EXPECTED THIS AUTUMN. PRISONERS HELD AT KORYDALLOS PRISON UNTIL APPEAL.

3. PRESS AND RADIO/TV REPORTED COURT FINDINGS FOR EACH OF FORTY ACCUSED.

4. COMMENT. CURT FOLLOWED PROSECUTION'S DEMANDS FOR 34 CONVICTIONS AND SIX ACQUITTALS AND CLOSELY PARALLELED SENTENCES DEMANDED WITH ONLY EXCEPTIONS BEING SIX MONTHS LESS FOR BALOPOULOS AND ONE YEAR ADDITIONAL SENTENCE FOR TSONIS. LOCAL OBSERVERS ANTICIPATE THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT MILITARY REVIEW COURT WILL REVERSE CONVICTIONS OR REDUCE SENTENCES. TASCA

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